

What you need to know about moving household goods

By Claudia Thompson

Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Litigation and Claims Branch, Presidio of Monterey

If you will be making a government-sponsored move in the near future, you should keep purchase receipts, cancelled checks, credit card receipts, and appraisals with you as you move because these important papers could get lost in shipment. If that happens, you might have a hard time substantiating the original value of your property.

Plan to separate non-furniture items by category before the packers arrive at your residence or barracks so that similar items will be packed together. Some claimants have argued that a stereo or VCR was packed with clothing; however, without evidence to substantiate this, the claims rules won't allow payment.

Ensure that the packers list your high value items on the inventory with serial number (if there is one). Take a few minutes to scan the inventory and look for those high dollar items with serial numbers. Also, make sure the household goods carrier has not listed pre-existing damage (other than normal wear and tear) unless such pre-existing damage is actually present. If you have a major disagreement with members of the packing crew, contact your local Transportation Office and ask for a Quality Control Inspector to come to the packing site.

When you receive your household goods at the destination, make sure you are satisfied with the delivery before you sign the delivery receipt. The "delivery receipt" is a pink form (in triplicate), DD Form 1840, Joint Statement of Loss/Damage. You should list any obvious loss or damage before you sign.

After delivery, you have 70 days to list additional loss and damage on the reverse side of the pink forms in triplicate (DD Form 1840R). This would consist of loss and damage not previously listed at delivery. Be sure to reverse the carbons when filling out the back of the form. Take these pink forms to a Claims Office within the 70-day period after delivery. If you don't turn in the pink forms within 70 days of delivery, you may suffer a reduction in payment of your claim or a complete denial of your claim.

You have two years from the delivery date to file a claim with the U.S. Army. If you have missed this two-year deadline, you still have the option to file a claim directly with the household goods carrier who shipped your goods. This option is open for six years after delivery.

Please address any questions about household goods claims to Mrs. Thompson, Personnel Claims Supervisor, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, at 242-6388.